



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
1820 EAST 17TH STREET, SUITE 115
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO 83404
208-523-0855, FAX 208-522-4515**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Special Agent Scott Bragonier, (208) 523-0855

PROTECTED BIRDS FOUND SHOT NEAR GRAY'S LAKE OUTLET, BONNEVILLE COUNTY, IDAHO

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game law enforcement agents have confirmed that over 40 birds near Gray's Lake Outlet in southern Bonneville County have been found shot.

The birds, mostly juveniles, were discovered in a marsh. All had broken bones and apparent gunshot wounds. It appears an entire brood of Canvasback ducklings had been shot, as well as grebes, coots, and one ruddy duck. Investigators found a large quantity of empty rifle cartridges in the area. Law enforcement agents believe the killings occurred the weekend of July 22-23, 2006. A similar incident occurred on July 30, 2006 near Wood Canyon in Bear Lake County, and is also being investigated.

The killing of waterfowl and other migratory birds is a violation of the federal Migratory Bird Act and Idaho State law. Scott Bragonier, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent, said, "The condition and location of the dead birds suggests illegal activity. We strongly urge citizens with knowledge about this activity, or other similar incidents, to come forward with information." Callers may remain anonymous, and a reward may be offered for information leading to a conviction of the person or persons responsible for this crime.

The killing of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is punishable by a fine of up to \$15,000 and six months in jail. Persons with information about this crime may call the Idaho "Citizens Against Poaching" hotline at 1-800-632-5999, or the Service's Law Enforcement Office in Idaho Falls at (208) 523-0855.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.